ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health of the Urban District of Farnham,

1898.

I beg to report that during the year I have received notifications of 28 cases of Zymotic Disease. This, I am glad to say, is a much smaller number than for the previous year which was 39. The number is made up of Scarlatina, 13; Diphtheria, 4; Typhoid Fever, 2; Erysipelas, 9; and they have been distributed over the year as will be seen by the following table:—

	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.
January	..	..	1	..
February	1	..	..	..
March	..	..	..	..
April	..	..	..	..
May	1	..	..	..
June	1	..	..	..
July	..	..	..	..
August	1	..	..	1
September	..	..	..	..
October	1	2	..	4
November	7	2	1	3
December	1	..	..	1

Scarlatina.——In all 13 cases occurred in the district. The case in February was an inmate of the Master's house at the Workhouse. The next case (in May) was in a tailor's sempstress lodging at a public-house in the town; at this time the temporary Isolation Hospital was erected, but not furnished or fitted up, however, the urgency of removing this case appeared so great, that a successful effort was made to get ready the building at once, and the patient was received in something under 24 hours from my application for its admission, and by good fortune infection was not spread from the case. There were also 3 other isolated cases, one in June in Darvill's Lane, one in Babb's Mead in August, in neither of which was their any evidence as to whence the infection came, and one in December, in which case the infection was pretty clearly imported from a village where the person had been visiting. The remaining 8 cases all occurred within 21 days in October and November, were all except one among children of school age and were all removed to the temporary Isolation Hospital. The cause of this outbreak was traceable with great probability, but not with certainty, to some children, who I think must have had the disease without its having been recognised by the parents, who consequently did not prevent their mixing with other people as if nothing were the matter.

Diphtheria.——4 cases. Two were removed to the temporary Isolation Hospital, one was isolated at home, and one in lodgings in the town with a nurse. The only connection between any of these cases was that the two cases in October had their milk from the same source, a dairy outside the town. I made enquiries at this dairy, but could not find any evidence of any case of diphtheria amongst any of the employes who had anything to do with the milk. The milk, however, was placed after milking in a building abutting on a farm-yard which was very far from clean. On none of the 4 premises where the patients lived was there any very great sanitary defect, though they were not faultless.

Typhoid Fever.——There have been only two cases, one in January and one in November. In the first case the temporary Isolation Hospital was not put up, so the case though in an exceedingly crowded cottage had to be treated at home. Their drainage was not specially bad and they had town water to drink. In the second case the premises were very dirty, and with very insufficient closet accommodation. Town water is laid on for drinking. Notices have been sent to put these premises in proper order.

Erysipelas.—There have been 9 cases, the same number as occurred the previous year: one case was in an inmate of the Union, two cases were caused by accidental injuries and were not due to any sanitary defects in their surroundings, in three others the premises were examined and did not appear to be to blame: in the three remaining cases were found sanitary defects more or less bad, two have been remedied and one is about to be put right though it has not been actually done. One of these cases terminated fatally.

Influenza.—In the first 4 or 5 months of the year there was a considerable amount of this disease and it caused 4 deaths in the town and one in the Union.

Whooping Cough was somewhat severe, and caused 3 deaths in the town and 3 in the Union.

Measles has been prevalent at times, but has caused no death.

Isolation Hospital.—A temporary iron building was erected in the early part of the year and was taken into use in May and has been of very great assistance. It was no doubt due to its having been open, that we were able to cope so successfully with the Scarlatina epidemic in November. The permanent building was opened on January 2nd, 1899. It consists of 2 blocks for patients, each containing 2 wards and a nurse's room, with well arranged closets and bath room. The floors are cemented and the warming is done by an open stove in the middle of the ward, the smoke being conducted away by a flue under the floor. There is a disinfecting apparatus for clothing, &c., on the premises. Good arrangements have been made for water supply and a system of drainage started, which seems likely to be very efficient. The administrative block is a separate building and is very complete, containing matron's rooms, nurses' rooms, kitchens, dispensary, &c.

Water Supply.—The Surveyor has been making a systematic inspection of the town and tabulating the results, so that a most valuable amount of information is being accumulated and the defective premises are being brought to the notice of the Council month by month. As a result of this action I am glad to be able to report that 77 houses have been provided with efficient flushing to their closets (which had not had it before) besides 14 other houses which have been provided with an amended supply, most from the Water Company's mains. By my suggestion the Council wrote in June to the Rural District Council to ask if they would approve a joint inspection, by their medical officer and one of their members, a nominee of the Water Company, with one of your members and medical officer, of the sources of the supply of the water, arising in their district, and used by the Farnham Water Company. This they agreed to, but having not yet made their nomination, no action has followed.

Houses unfit for human habitation. The house occupied by Mrs. Blackman in Abbey Street, condemned in June 1897, remains in the same condition. No. ~~21~~ 81 East Street, condemned in March 1898, except for being cleansed has been left unaltered.

Miscellaneous. In June I inspected Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 Abbey Street and found the premises very bad, and much out of repair. The water was from old pumps and very unsatisfactory. The town supply has been since laid on both for drinking and flushing purposes.

In August I reported on the faulty arrangements for disposal of surface water at the Stores, 35 Downing Street, but nothing has been done to remedy the condition of the yard which led to flooding of the ground floor and cellars and produced illness in the occupier of the house. My attention having been directed to Beaver's Yard by noticing that the only two deaths from Diarrhœa had occurred in it, I inspected it and found a very objectionable method of slop removal: this has since been remedied.

The case of Diphtheria at the "Fox and Hounds," West Street, led me to inspect these premises, where milk is sold, and I found that the place in which the milk was kept for sale, was a cellar badly lighted and ventilated, not at all clean, and not shut off from the living rooms of the house. This has not been altered yet.

A memorial having been received by the Council signed by a considerable number of persons complaining of nuisance arising from fish-frying as carried on by Mr. Lord of 33 Downing Street, and Mr. E. Clarke of 37 Downing Street, I inspected both these premises. I found Mr. Lord's premises dirty and did not consider that he was taking all the precautions he could to obviate the nuisance arising from his business. He was summoned before the magistrates and convicted. Mr. E. Clarke's premises were much cleaner, and he promised to provide the best apparatus for the work that could be put up.

Death Rate. This is slightly higher than last year and nearly the same as in 1896; but as the percentage of deaths from Zymotic Disease is slightly less than either 1897 or 1896, it is evident that the increased death-rate is not from any preventable causes. The percentages shown in the following table have been calculated on an estimated population of 5950.

	DEATHS IN TOWN.			BIRTHS.	DEATHS IN UNION.			BIRTHS.
	Totals.	Zymotic Disease.	Under 1 year.		Totals.	Zymotic Disease.	Under 1 year.	
January	6	..	1	9	6	..	..	..
February	12	3	5	7	8	1	..	..
March	12	1	2	7	10	1	1	1
April	6	2	..	8	6	..	..	1
May	2	..	..	8	2	..	..	..
June	5	1	..	14	5	2	..	6
July	10	..	2	8	2	..	1	1
August	3	..	1	11	4	..	..	2
September	7	..	2	11	4	..	..	1
October	8	..	..	7	5	..	..	1
November	4	1	..	13	3	1	..	1
December	5	..	2	15	4	..	1	3
In Surrey C. Asylum	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..
Guildford Hospital	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
TOTALS	81	8	15	118	63	5	3	17
Per 1000 per Annum	13.61	1.34	2.52	19.83	..	..	..	..
Ditto in 1897 ..	11.62	1.37	2.05	26.32	..	..	..	..
Ditto in 1896 ..	13.44	2.25	2.40	23.27	..	..	..	..

S. G SLOMAN,

24th February, 1899.

Medical Officer of Health.